

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. In May 1950 the position of political officer at company level was reestablished in the Soviet Army. His official title is Deputy Company Commander-Political ("Zamestitel' Komandira Roty po Politichasti"). This officer is responsible for political indoctrination of enlisted personnel. He does not conduct any political work among officers attached to the company, and is not responsible for their indoctrination. The position of deputy company commander-political had been established in the Soviet Army for a short period during the world war II, from Spring to Fall 1943 [redacted]. This means that from Fall 1943 to Spring 1950 there were no political officers in company size units in the Soviet Army. Therefore it would be wrong to consider the creation of this position as a return of the Soviet Army to a wartime basis. The purpose of the present policy, as it was explained in the war Ministry directive 0085 issued in Aug 1951 [redacted] is to relieve company commanding officers from work and responsibilities not directly connected with combat training and readiness of their units. Political officers are subordinate to their immediate commanding officers at all levels.
2. Political officers at battalion level have the status of Deputy Commanding Officer-Political. They are responsible for political indoctrination of the battalion's entire personnel including both officers and enlisted men. In the field of political education the battalion's political officer is the immediate superior of all company political officers. A similar position of Deputy Commanding Officer-Political exists also in all regimental size units.

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3. According to army regulations all deputies for political affairs have less disciplinary power than their respective commander. This disciplinary power extends not only to the political field but, like any line officer's, to any kind of disciplinary violations. I believe that if political officers were deprived of their ordinary disciplinary power, their position in the army would become quite insignificant.
4. In divisions and larger units there is in addition to Deputy Commander-Political a so-called Division (Army) Party Commission (Divizionnaya (Armeyskaya) Partynaya Komissiya), composed of five elected members of the Communist Party and a secretary. Usually members of this commission are ranking officers, regimental or battalion commanders or staff officers. This commission does not have any disciplinary power over ordinary military personnel. Its power is restricted to political matters and applies only to regular party members, not even to Komsomol members. The commission has the authority to summon to its session any party member violating discipline or deviating from the party line and to impose the following punishments: a warning, a reprimand, a severe reprimand, expulsion from the party. Political punishments imposed by this commission in no way preclude other punishments for the same violation by responsible military commanders.
5. Although the power of MGB is almost unlimited it does not officially extend to the army. MGB is not authorized to investigate or arrest military personnel without permission from the respective unit commander. In practice, however, a commander is never asked for "permission"; at best, MGB simply "notifies" the commanding officer of what they are doing in his unit.
6. The attitude of Soviet soldiers toward political indoctrination may be briefly qualified as indifferent and apathetic. Soldiers are not interested in political lectures, mainly because they are "dry stuff", and partly because soldiers feel, instinctively if not clearly, that the political indoctrination is mostly based on lies. Since attendance is obligatory, soldiers have to sit through the lectures and listen to them, or at least pretend to do so. There are no discussions after lectures, but it is customary for the lecturer to ask the audience whether there are any questions. Everybody is afraid to ask any questions which may be interpreted as criticisms of the regime or of the party policy. Occasionally, however, such questions are asked in spite of possible consequences. They are left either unanswered, or the questioner is cut off with: "So it is, and so it will be."
7. the main line of political propaganda and indoctrination in the army was the same: "America is preparing for an aggressive war against the Soviet Union". This propaganda had actually started much earlier than 1949, probably in 1946, and is still the main subject exploited at meetings and lectures. I did not notice any new development or change in the Party line as expounded in the Soviet Army. Among political publications available to officers and enlisted men I remember the following: Propagandist i Agitator", Blokmot Agitatora" (Agitator's Notebook), both monthly periodicals. I do not recall the name

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of the editors. There were several other weekly and monthly periodicals but I do not remember their titles. I never read any of them, and I believe nobody did. This is not only because army personnel do not have sufficient time, but because these publications are of no interest to them. Soldiers mostly use these periodicals for cigarette paper. Frequently political officers give short press reviews covering news at home and abroad. It is hard to say whether soldiers feel that they are kept well informed. It must be remembered that these lectures are their only source of information and that the majority of soldiers probably believe what they are told, except, of course, the lies about America preparing for aggressive war against the Soviet Union, which are discounted by a great majority. Soviet propaganda broadcasts, just as propaganda lectures, are met with indifference and apathy. Musical programs and sport events on the contrary, attract large audiences. I never heard of any informal "talks" and "chats" employed as a means of political indoctrination. As far as I could notice, there never were discussions among soldiers after political meetings or lectures elaborating on ideas presented by the lecturer. Such discussions are rare even among officers who do not like to talk in public about "ticklish matters"

8. Soviet films are shown to soldiers as a part of morale education. These are usually Soviet patriotic films glorifying the Red Army, military heroes, or national figures like Minin, Pozharskiy, and Suvorov. Normally these films are shown on Saturday and Sunday. All these films, although very good from the artistic point of view, are "old stuff" shown over and over, and therefore do not attract large audiences. None is without some propaganda element. Otherwise, except for soccer games, there are no recreational activities available to Soviet soldiers.
9. In off duty hours Soviet soldiers feel more lonely than they were in the USSR; they hang around and do not give the impression of being happy. It is true that in the army they get better billets, better food and better clothes, and even their work is not as hard as at home. All this, however, does not compensate for the loss of freedom of movement to which they are subjected in Germany. I cannot say that there is a general dissatisfaction with the regime among soldiers. There is no immediate link in a soldier's mind between his personal unhappiness and the policy of the regime. I would say that basically soldiers are dissatisfied with the conditions of their life, but this feeling is subdued and it would be hard to say how many soldiers actually put the blame on the regime for their unhappiness. Moreover, there is quite a difference between war veterans and young soldiers. The first group is much more dissatisfied, and even bitter, than the youngsters who take all restrictions imposed upon them as something belonging to army life and for which there is no cure.
10. Since General Eisenhower was sent to Europe, Soviet propaganda blasts him as an aggressor preparing an attack against the Soviet Union. Soviet war veterans who had heard much about Gen Eisenhower during and immediately after the war have quite a favorable opinion of him. Stories are told of his personal friendship with Marshal Zhukov, who was extremely popular among the military. They do not believe the warmongering stories about Eisenhower. But it cannot be forgotten that

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propaganda is a tremendous weapon, and the same lies repeated day after day are slowly gaining ground. On the other hand there are fewer and fewer war veterans with a sound judgement in the Soviet Army. I am in no position to say what effect the election of General Eisenhower to the Presidency of the United States would have on the Russian people. I for myself am sure that Soviet propaganda will not fail to capitalize on this event in order to convince the population that the "warmongering" policy of General Eisenhower has become the national policy of the US. But many Soviet citizens would discard this threat with a shrug of the shoulders: "So what?" They know that there is no liberation from the Communist regime without a war in which it is defeated.

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